

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

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AHT 12/14/03*

Cancel claim 2 without prejudice;

Rewrite claims 1, 3, 4 and 12 as follows; and

Add the following new claim 18:

1. (Currently Amended) A rotary printing machine comprising a pair of sheet holding and transfer systems disposed in side-by-side relation for transferring sheets in the printing machine, said sheet holding and transfer systems defining a sheet transfer area therebetween at a tangential point between said sheet holding and transfer systems,

a sheet guide apparatus disposed underneath said transfer area, said sheet guide apparatus including a sheet guide which defines a guide surface for guiding movement of sheets adjacent said transfer area, said sheet guide including a comb shaped end with spaced apart guide fingers adjacent said transfer area,

a first pneumatic system for directing air in said sheet guide and through said guide surface for guiding sheet movement along said guide surface, and

a second separate pneumatic system operable for blowing an air stream over an external end of said sheet guide comb and into spaces between said guide fingers and toward said transfer area to facilitate reliable transfer of sheets between said sheet holding and transfer systems.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The printing machine of claim 2 1 in which said sheet holding and transfer systems comprise a pair of sheet carrying cylinders.

4. (Currently Amended) The printing machine of claim 2 1 in which said sheet transfer and holding systems comprise one sheet-carrying cylinder and a circulating conveyor system.